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Salop Education Committee.

ANNUAL REPORT

FOR 1945

OF THE

SCHOOL MEDICAL OFFICER

WILLIAM TAYLOR, M.D., D.P.H.



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To the Chairman and Members of the Education Committee.

SIR, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report on the School Health Service for the year 1945. In accordance with the recommendation of the Ministry of Education, it is again very brief and consists mainly of statistical information.

Consequent upon the coming into operation on 1st April, 1945, of the Education Act, 1944, a number of changes were of necessity introduced into the School Health Service. These developments will be dealt with in the Annual Report for 1946, which will be the first complete year under the new Act.

It should, however, be noted that the statistics in this report are not strictly comparable with those given in previous years, in that the statistical information relating to pupils in attendance at all maintained schools has been combined, whereas in previous reports separate tables were given for elementary and secondary school children.

Furthermore, with the coming into operation of the new Education Act on 1st April, 1945, the Shrewsbury Borough Council then ceased to be an independent Authority for Elementary Education ; and the figures relating to the schools in the Borough of Shrewsbury have, therefore, been included for the first time in the Annual Report of the School Medical Officer of the Salop Local Education Authority.

I wish to express my appreciation of the assistance received in the preparation of this report, from Mr. C. V. Biddulph, Senior Clerk in the School Health section of this office.

I am, Sir, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

WILLIAM TAYLOR,

School Medical Officer.

COUNTY HEALTH OFFICE,
COLLEGE HILL,
SHREWSBURY.

February, 1947.

Annual Report for the Year 1945.

GENERAL.

The area covered by the Salop Education Authority comprises 861,800 acres, and has an estimated population of 256,530.

The Borough of Shrewsbury, the area and population of which are included in these figures, was during 1944 an independent Authority for Elementary Education. As a result of the Education Act, 1944, however, the Shrewsbury Borough Council on the 1st April, 1945, ceased to be a separate Elementary Education Authority, and its responsibility in this respect passed to the County Council.

At the end of 1945 there were in the County of Salop, including the Borough of Shrewsbury, 278 Primary schools containing 310 departments, 10 Secondary Modern Schools containing 12 departments, 15 Secondary Grammar Schools, 3 Technical Colleges and 2 Nursery Schools; 37,995 pupils were on the register, comprising 37,768 Shropshire pupils, 81 "private" evacuees, and 146 official evacuees.

The staff of the School Health Service during 1945 consisted of :—

The School Medical Officer.

The Deputy School Medical Officer.

Seven Assistant School Medical Officers, who also undertake Child Welfare and other County Council duties (two on war service).

Five Dental Officers (one on War Service).

Five Dental Attendants (one on War Service).

Two whole-time School Nurses.

Sixteen Health Visitors undertaking School Nursing.

One Nurse working independently.

One Nurse working part-time at School Clinics.

Forty-four District Nurses undertaking part-time School Nursing duties.

Chief among the Departmental Staff changes during the year, were the transfer from the Borough of Shrewsbury, to the Salop Education Authority, on 1st April, 1945, of Dr. K. M. Ball, Assistant Medical Officer, and Dr. B. Scharf, temporary School Dental Officer. Several changes also took place among the whole-time Health Visitors and among the District Nurses assisting in the School Health Service.

EVACUATION SCHEME.

Some 12,000 children were sent to this County in 1939 under the Government Evacuation Scheme for unaccompanied children, and although many of them returned home during the following months, a second evacuation to this County took place in the summer of 1940. No mass return immediately followed, but considerable numbers of these children gradually departed, and at the beginning of 1945, only 1,271 remained in Shropshire, despite a temporary increase due to enemy air activity in the Autumn of 1944, which had raised the figure to 2,008 in September of that year.

By the end of 1945 the number had again fallen, and on the 31st December, 1945, there were only 224 evacuees remaining in the County.

SCHOOL MEDICAL INSPECTION AND TREATMENT.

During the year there were only five Assistant Medical Officers available to undertake the work in the schools. The number of routine medical examinations carried out was 11,280 as compared with 12,238 during 1944, and the number of schools unvisited during the year was 104 as compared with 55 during the previous year.

The continuing absence on active service of two of the seven Assistant Medical Officers, together with the increase in the amount of other work, was responsible for the increased number of schools which the Assistant Medical Officers were unable to visit during 1945. These Medical Officers have now returned to duty in the County and it is anticipated that during the year 1947 the interval between Medical Inspections will be considerably reduced.

Cleanliness.—The School Nurses continued to carry out the ordinary inspections of pupils of elementary schools for verminous infestation, making following up inspections of those who were found to harbour lice or nits. In 1945, when a total of 98,646 head examinations were made, these resulted in the finding of 3,399 verminous pupils, a percentage of 11.4. Thus the improvement in cleanliness reported in 1943 and 1944, when the percentages of pupils found verminous were 8.4 (the lowest rate recorded during the War) and 9.1 respectively, was not maintained. The most important cause of this increase in verminous infestation amongst pupils (which is not confined to this County) is probably the increased employment outside the home of mothers, who consequently have less time available to devote to the care of their children. It is possible also that difficulty in procuring such articles as fine toothed combs has been partly responsible.

On the other hand it is gratifying to record that the incidence of scabies in the schools during the year fell once again as compared with the previous year, the number of cases of this disease reported by the teachers during 1945 having been 156, as compared with 212 during the previous year.

Nutrition.—The nutrition of a child, if it were possible accurately to assess it, would be an excellent index of the state of his general health, and for the purposes of the School Health Service the Ministry of Education recommend that in this respect the pupils should be divided into four groups, "excellent," "normal," "slightly sub-normal," and "bad". The assessment of nutrition in each case depends very largely on the individual judgment of the examining Medical Officer, and many efforts have been made to devise some standardised method for the estimation of nutrition which would exclude or reduce the variations due to this personal factor, not, however, with complete success.

Of the Medical Officers from whose findings the table below is prepared, four have held their present posts in the County since before the War, and it is justifiable to assume that their individual standards of nutrition have remained constant, but the figures of the remaining Medical Officer have not previously been included in this table, and it is possible that the slight variations in the percentages for 1945, compared with those for the previous year, may to a certain extent be due to this fact. Some support is lent to this opinion by the fact that of the 50 pupils whose nutritional state was classified as "bad," 49 had been reported on by this Medical Officer.

It is interesting, however, to note the variations in the four nutritional groups during the eight years from 1938 to 1945, and it will be seen from the figures given below that although the percentages of those considered "excellent" have decreased somewhat during the War, the percentages of those in the "slightly sub-normal" group have done so substantially; and while the percentage of pupils in the combined "excellent" and "normal" nutritional group reached in 1944 a higher level than ever before, the percentage of pupils in this combined group in 1945, although slightly lower than for 1944, was higher than that for any other year which had previously been recorded, thus tending to give the impression that in spite of war-time conditions, the general health of the pupils has on the whole been well maintained and may even have improved.

PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN IN NUTRITIONAL GROUPS.

Grades of Nutrition.	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945
Excellent	12.06	9.26	8.93	6.66	5.22	8.36	8.04	11.54
Normal	75.16	75.91	79.85	83.10	84.65	81.56	85.87	80.84
Slightly Sub-normal ..	12.61	14.62	11.14	10.17	9.96	9.95	6.07	7.17
Bad .. ..	.17	.22	.09	.07	.17	.13	.02	.45

The reason for the steady improvement in the nutrition of the school population during the war years is probably mainly economic. Employment having been maintained at a high level there was probably more money available, and the rationing system ensured that food was fairly distributed. In addition, the Milk in Schools Scheme and the provision of school meals have been factors concerned.

Milk in Schools Scheme.—An enquiry made at the end of 1945 showed that 70 per cent of the pupils of the maintained schools in the County were receiving milk under the Milk in Schools Scheme, as compared with 71 per cent on the corresponding day in 1944. It is regrettable that even this small reduction in the percentage of pupils taking milk in schools should have followed the drop from 73.3 to 71 per cent which occurred in the previous year, as one of the most important factors in contributing to a high level of health and nutrition in childhood is the drinking of milk.

School Canteens.—Canteens served 78 schools in 1944, but at the end of 1945 as many as 121 schools comprising 147 departments with an attendance of 20,127 pupils—that is 53 per cent of the total number of pupils attending the maintained schools in the County—were served by these Canteens. However, owing either to apathy or lack of appreciation on the part of many parents of the benefits to be derived from the consumption at a school canteen of a well-balanced mid-day meal, only 11,318 of these pupils took advantage of this service.

Vocational Guidance.—In the early part of the year, a scheme was put into operation in the Elementary Schools under which the Assistant Medical Officer makes a special report at the time of the last routine medical examination of a pupil, indicating whether for reasons of health he considers him unsuitable for work of any particular type. When the pupil leaves school, this report together with his own "School Leaving Report," is sent by the Head to the Local Office of the Ministry of Labour or to the Juvenile Employment Bureau. It is then used by the Vocational Guidance Officers for ensuring that a pupil, on leaving school, is not put to employment for which he is either mentally or physically unsuitable.

The scheme was later expanded to afford opportunities for enrolment in the Register of Disabled Persons of those pupils who are, in the opinion of the Medical Officers, likely to be handicapped by reason of some disability of body or mind in obtaining or keeping employment. They thus become entitled not only to an opportunity of obtaining from the Ministry of Labour sheltered employment, but also the special educational training open to those whose names are on the Register of Disabled Persons.

Diphtheria Immunisation.—The primary responsibility for the immunisation of children against Diphtheria has in the past rested with the Local Sanitary Authority. In 1942, however, the County Council assumed concurrent responsibility with the District Councils for ensuring that immunisation against Diphtheria was available to all children below the age of fifteen years whose

parents were willing to accept this preventive treatment : and except in the borough of Shrewsbury, which has a very complete scheme of its own, much the greater part of the Diphtheria Immunisation work in the County has since that year been carried out under the County Council scheme by the Assistant Medical Officers.

In Circular 194/45, dated 14th November, 1945, the primary responsibility for ensuring that facilities are available for the immunisation against Diphtheria of children under five years of age was officially placed upon Welfare Authorities from 1st January, 1946, and the County Council is therefore responsible for making arrangements for the immunisation of these children throughout the County with the exception of those residing in the Borough of Shrewsbury, which is an independent Child Welfare Authority.

During 1945, out of a total of 533 children, between 5 and 15 years of age, who were immunised, 472 were dealt with under the County Council Scheme, 55 were immunised under the Scheme for the Borough of Shrewsbury, and 6 were dealt with under arrangements made by the other District Councils.

On the 31st December, 1945, the percentage of pupils in the County of Salop, between the ages of 5 and 15 years, who had been immunised against diphtheria was 84.9. This percentage includes those children, now of school age, who were protected against diphtheria before attaining the age of five years.

IMMUNISATION STATISTICS FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN IN THE COUNTY OF SALOP.

Area.	Local Sanitary Authority	Number Immunised from 1st Jan. to 31st Dec. 1945.	Percentage Immunised at 31st Dec. 1945.
N.W. Combined District	Ellesmere Urban	16	77
	Ellesmere Rural	18	92
	Oswestry Borough	20	97
	Oswestry Rural	49	92
	Wem Urban	4	84
	Wem Rural	34	71
	Whitchurch Urban	11	92
N.E. Combined District	Dawley Urban	2	63
	Market Drayton Urban	13	94
	Drayton Rural	27	80
	Newport Urban	1	73
	Oakengates Urban	5	64
	Shifnal Rural	13	97
	Wellington Urban	21	69
	Wellington Rural	26	93
S.W. Combined District	Atcham Rural	52	91
	Bishop's Castle Borough	1	96
	Church Stretton Urban	—	90
	Clun Rural	10	85
	Wenlock Borough	47	90
	Ludlow Borough	36	95
	Ludlow Rural	36	87
Bridgnorth	Bridgnorth Borough	10	66
	Bridgnorth Rural	26	71
Shrewsbury	Shrewsbury Borough	55	85
	Whole County	533	84.9

The following table gives the number of immunisations, of children between 5—15 years of age, in each year since the County Council scheme came into operation in 1942, and shows that a total of 5,211 school children have been immunised by the Assistant Medical Officers during this time. It will be seen that the number of those immunised by Assistant Medical Officers during 1945 fell from 485 to 472 as compared with the previous year, and that the total number of school children immunised fell from 695 in 1944 to 533 in 1945.

The success of the immunisation campaign in previous years provided a partial, if not complete, explanation of this fall, as the number of unprotected children of school age has now been so much reduced that the number in each year who qualify for immunisation has fallen accordingly.

SCHOOL CHILDREN IMMUNISED SINCE 1ST JANUARY, 1942.

Year.	No. of School Children immunised.			
	Under County Council's Scheme.	Under Scheme for Borough of Shrewsbury.	Under District Council's Scheme.	Totals.
1942	1525	769	6016	8310
1943	2729	353	1487	4569
1944	485	103	107	695
1945	472	55	6	533
Total for 4 years ..	5211	1280	7616	14107

The effects of the Immunisation Campaign are demonstrated by statistics showing the incidence of Diphtheria and the number of deaths from this disease among persons of all ages in the County during the past 12 years. These figures, including those for the Borough of Shrewsbury, are set out below :—

NOTIFICATIONS AND DEATHS FROM DIPHTHERIA SINCE 1934.

Year	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945
Notifications	191	223	301	206	185	133	236	237	121	53	25	7
Deaths	9	20	20	7	19	13	11	9	6	6	1	—

SCHOOL DENTAL SERVICE.

With regard to the School Dental Scheme, the principal event of the year was the commencement made in the use of General Anaesthetics, in that area of the county for which Mr. Catchpole is the School Dental Officer. The apparatus which is used is not only very compact and portable but also very satisfactory, and it obviates the tiresome necessity of arranging to treat patients at Hospitals and Doctors' Surgeries as has been done in the past. It also permits the School Dental Officer to deal satisfactorily and quickly with cases which in the past would have been left ineffectively treated, and parents are pleased when they see in this extension of the service

an approximation to the facilities offered by the private dental practitioner. This extension is a very desirable addition to the School Dental Service, and has special significance in view of the developments which will take place under the provisions of the new Education Act. Indeed gas sessions are a valuable and indispensable aid to the School Dental Service, and general anaesthesia is a boon to humanity which ought to be readily available, when required, for all school children undergoing dental treatment.

With the coming into operation on the 1st April, 1945, of the new Education Act, and the consequent abolition of fees for pupils attending maintained Secondary Grammar and Technical Schools, all pupils of these schools became eligible for free treatment under the Local Education Authority's Scheme. Many of the children, who had regularly received treatment during the time they attended elementary schools, were deprived of the benefits of the Local Education Authority's Dental Scheme as a consequence of becoming fee-payers at the Secondary Schools. Of these Secondary School pupils, whose parents had cared sufficiently to be willing to pay for educational facilities, Mr. Catchpole states that many, when they came back to the School Dental Officer again, had had no dental treatment since leaving the elementary school, and that his task was somewhat overwhelming, as so much had then to be done for each pupil.

With regard to the treatment of the older pupils of the Secondary Grammar and Technical Schools, Mr. Catchpole further states: "The older the child, the longer it takes to carry out dental treatment, as the work itself is principally conservative in nature and of a complicated and involved kind. The dental care of adolescents makes greater demands on the skill of the dentist than the simpler operations on the younger child. I sometimes think this is not realised, and I would suggest that this, the most difficult part of the work, be done between March and September and that it be realised that 16, 17 and 18 year-olds cannot be done as quickly as children ten years younger, if a worthy standard of work comparable with that of the private practitioners is to be maintained. I am expecting the number of children accepting treatment from the Grammar Schools to increase steadily in the future, since these schools will now recruit their pupils very largely from the primary departments, already under the care of the School Dental Officer."

STATISTICAL TABLES.

No distinction is made between pupils ordinarily attending schools in the area of the Local Education Authority and pupils who have transferred to the area as a result of evacuation.

TABLE I. (A)—ROUTINE MEDICAL INSPECTIONS.

Number of Inspections in the prescribed groups :—

					<i>1944</i>	<i>1945</i>
Entrants	..	..	..	..	3,810	3,317
Intermediates	..	..	..	..	3,489	2,924
Leavers	..	..	..	..	2,295	4,842
					<hr/> 9,594	<hr/> 11,083
Secondary Grammar and Technical School						
Pupils inspected prior to 1st April, 1945	..				2,644	197
					<hr/> 12,238	<hr/> 11,280
				Total ..		

The 11,083 pupils examined during 1945 include not only all pupils in attendance at Primary and Secondary Modern Schools who were inspected during that year, but also those Secondary Grammar School and Technical College pupils who were examined on or after 1st April, 1945.

In addition, 197 Secondary Grammar School pupils were examined before 1st April, 1945, thus bringing the total number of Routine Medical Inspections carried out during 1945 to 11,280 compared with 12,238 during 1944.

TABLE 1. (B)—OTHER INSPECTIONS.

	<i>1944</i>	<i>1945</i>
Number of Special Inspections	4,420	6,183
Number of Re-Inspections ..	4,260	6,763
Total ..	8,680	12,946

TABLE II.—CLASSIFICATION OF THE NUTRITION OF CHILDREN INSPECTED DURING THE YEAR IN THE ROUTINE AGE GROUPS.

Age Groups.	Number of Children Inspected.	A. (Excellent).		B. (Normal).		C. (Slightly Subnormal).		D. (Bad).	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Entrants	3317	389	11.72	2584	77.91	330	9.95	14	.42
Second Age-group	2924	368	12.58	2257	77.19	276	9.44	23	.79
Third Age-group	4842	534	11.03	4097	84.61	198	4.09	13	.27
† Other Routine Inspections ..	197	11	5.58	181	91.87	5	2.55	—	—
Total for 1945 ..	11,280	1302	11.54	9119	80.84	809	7.17	50	.45
„ „ 1944 ..	12,047	1030	8.54	10392	86.26	623	5.18	2	.02

† Secondary School pupils inspected before 1st April, 1945.

TABLE III.—PARTICULARS OF CASES TREATED.

GROUP I.—TREATMENT OF MINOR AILMENTS.

	<i>1944</i>	<i>1945</i>
Total number of defects treated or under treatment ..	4406	6362

GROUP II.—TREATMENT OF DEFECTIVE VISION AND SQUINT (excluding Minor Eye Defects included in Group I).

Defect or Disease. (1)	No. of Defects dealt with under the Authority's Scheme (2)	No. of children for whom spectacles were	
		Prescribed under the Authority's Scheme. (3)	Obtained under the Authority's Scheme. (4)
Errors of Refraction (including squint)	1343		
Other Defect or Disease of the Eye	27		
Total ..	1370	1052	970

GROUP III.—TREATMENT OF DEFECTS OF NOSE AND THROAT.

Number of Defects—		
Received Operative Treatment under the Authority's Scheme in Clinic or Hospital (1)	Received other forms of Treatment. (2)	Total number treated. (3)
300	8	308

TABLE IV.—DENTAL INSPECTION AND TREATMENT.

Age	ROUTINE AGE GROUPS INSPECTED.															Total.
	Under 5	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18 and over	
Totals	461	2814	3006	3193	3342	3126	3107	3198	3153	3058	1103	628	313	143	23	32,791‡

‡ This figure includes 2,123 pupils of unspecified ages up to fourteen years, inspected in the Borough of Shrewsbury before 1st April, 1945.

Specials	..	..	322														TOTAL (Routine and Specials)	..	33,113
Number found to require treatment	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..			17,243
Number actually treated	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..			10,365*
Attendances made by children for treatment	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..			11,704
Half-days devoted to :—	{		Inspection		..	..	285	{		Total		1,598							
			Treatment		..	..	1,313												
Fillings :—	{		Permanent Teeth		..	..	5,526	{		Total		6,547							
			Temporary Teeth		..	..	1,021												
Extractions :—	{		Permanent Teeth		..	..	865	{		Total		10,907							
			Temporary Teeth		..	..	10,042												
Administrations of general anaesthetics for extractions	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..			336
Other operations :—	{		Permanent Teeth		..	..	1,331	{		Total		1,643							
			Temporary Teeth		..	..	312												

* Includes 332 children referred for treatment in 1944.

TABLE V.—UNCLEANLINESS AND VERMINOUS CONDITIONS.

(1) Average number of visits per school made during the year by the School Nurses or other authorised persons	7.32
(2) Total number of examinations of children in the schools by the School Nurses	98,646
(3) Number of individual children found unclean	3,399
(4) Number of children cleansed under arrangements made by the Local Education Authority	none
(5) Number of cases in which legal proceedings were taken :—	
(a) Under the Education Act, 1921	none
(b) Under School Attendance Bye-Laws	15

TABLE VI.—BLIND AND DEAF CHILDREN.

	At a Public Elementary School.	At an Institution other than a Special School.	At no School or Institution.
Blind Children	0	0	0
Deaf Children	1	0	0